

If a grower is a member of Ocean Spray, however, he delivers his berries to the plant in Middleboro. Every berry delivered today is either canned, bottled, or frozen by tomorrow. The only exceptions are made for the berries to be used as fresh fruit. They are handled slightly differently.

Everyone notices the harvest of cranberries, yet it is the maintenance of the bogs before and after harvesting that determines whether or not a grower will have a successful yield. What we do not often see is the cleaning of the ditches and the repairing of the equipment before winter frost arrives. The bogs are flooded to protect the vines and sand is spread on the ice.

Once the winter is over, the bogs are treated with fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. The entire irrigation system is checked. Between May 1 and June 15, there remains the constant threat of frost on the bogs. Often the irrigation systems are turned on to keep the sprinklers going. The constant flow of the water keeps the temperature of the bog at .32F. After June 15, however, the bogs are free from frost.

During the summer, the irrigation system is used to reduce the temperatures around the bog area or to offset a dry spell. In the early fall growers are on constant frost watch to protect their precious crop. Computerized sprinkler systems and monitors help in the process.

The cranberry business faces a constant battle with insects. Fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are used throughout the growing season. Chemicals used by the cranberry industry are safe, well-tested, and government-approved.

Cranberry bogs can last forever if cared for properly. That is why growers are careful to rejuvenate the old vines and try to promote new growth. For example, the Crowell cranberry bog on Rte. 14 is over 100 years old. Over 300 acres in town are producing fruit. Some principal growers in Duxbury are Crowell Cranberry Co., Earle Ricker, Beaton Cranberry Co., Laurence Pink, Edward Koplovsky, E. W. Loring, and Chris Geldmacher. Geldmacher, Black Cat Management Corp. and Red Eye Cranberry share in managing over 60 acres of town-owned bogs.

Massachusetts Cranberry Facts

Cranberries are one of only a handful of fruits native to No. America. Others are blueberries and Concord grapes. Both cranberries and blueberries are found naturally in wetlands and coastal uplands.

Most of the world's cranberries are cultivated on approximately 32,000 acres in just five U.S. states--Massachusetts, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington. Another 3,000 acres are cultivated in British Columbia and other parts of Canada.

Americans consume about 350 million pounds of cranberries per year.

The 1996 U.S. cranberry crop is expected to be 4.84 million barrels, up from 4.19 in 1995, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Massachusetts' projected 1996 cranberry crop is 1.97 million barrels, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The cranberry crop contributes more than \$200 million a year to the state's economy.

Other states' projected 1996 cranberry crops are: Wisconsin 1.89 million barrels, New Jersey 525,000 barrels, Oregon 270,000 barrels and Washington 180,000 barrels.

The average yield per planted acre in Massachusetts is approximately 136 barrels. A barrel equals 100 pounds.

Of the approximately 1,000 cranberry growers in North America, 560 are in Massachusetts.